

Blocked due to copyright.  
See full page image or  
microfilm.

# Bush Ends His 2-Year Quest for Presidency

## GOP Dropout Throws 'Whole-Hearted' Support to Reagan

**By ELLEN HUME**  
Times Staff Writer

HOUSTON—A disappointed George Bush ended his two-year, \$16.2-million quest for the presidency Monday and threw his "whole-hearted support" to the man who defeated him, Ronald Reagan.

"My overwhelming instinct was to stay and fight . . . but you've got to be realistic," Bush told 400 cheering supporters who crowded into the same hotel ballroom where, two months before, former Texas Gov. John B. Connally had bowed out of the same race.

"There is a widespread perception that the campaign is over. As a result, it has become increasingly difficult to raise the funds needed," Bush said. He estimated that his campaign was about \$300,000 in debt.

Bush sent a telegram to Reagan, congratulating the former California governor on his "superb campaign" and pledging his "whole-hearted support in a united party effort this fall to defeat Jimmy Carter."

Campaigning in Victorville, Calif., Reagan welcomed Bush's pledge of support. "His help will be welcomed and effective. Whatever difficulty we've had with regard to specific issues, we've always been united and determined to remove the present Administration in Washington from office," Reagan said.

Technically, Bush will remain a candidate in an attempt to qualify for federal matching funds to ease his deficit.

But Bush made it clear that he will ask his more than 200 delegates to cast their votes for Reagan on the first ballot at the GOP convention in July.

"I will work my heart out for him in the fall and do absolutely everything I can to guarantee his election," the former U.N. ambassador and CIA director said.

Although his surrender leaves Bush in an excellent position to be picked as Reagan's running mate, Bush once again dismissed any suggestion that he would accept the vice presidency. "Nothing has changed," he said. "I am not leaving the door open."

Later, as Bush and his wife, Barbara, served seafood crepes and beer to reporters at their elegant home here, Bush said the high point for him in the campaign had been last week's comeback victory in Michigan, where he upset Reagan 57% to 32%.

"Do you think I'm peaking too soon?" Bush had joked last Tuesday night as the Michigan results came in. Actually, Bush may be the only presidential candidate who peaked both too soon and too late.

The 56-year-old Bush first burst into the presidential sweepstakes with a surprise upset over Reagan in the Iowa caucuses Jan. 21, after selling himself as a younger, more energetic version of Reagan.

But Bush's victory jolted Reagan out of his above-the-fray strategy, and Bush lost badly Feb. 26 in New Hampshire when Reagan showed up to claim his longtime conservative constituency.

"Our plan was almost too good, too  
**Please Turn to Page 18, Col. 1**

**QUITS RACE** -George Bush with wife, Barbara, as he announces in Houston he is ending campaign for GOP presidential nomination.

Associated Press photo

# BUSH ENDS QUEST FOR PRESIDENCY

Continued from First Page

perfect," Bush campaign director James Baker recalled last week. "We shouldn't have won Iowa. We expected to come in a close second, and not have to carry the damned front-runner's burden for six weeks. We didn't have the long-term base that Reagan has out there."

The Bush campaign became too cautious, coasting on the Iowa victory instead of taking a chance and flushing out Bush's positions on the issues.

In his worst mistake of the campaign, Bush sat awkwardly on the stage at a debate in Nashua, N.H., while a string of Republican rivals stood behind him, hoping to force their way into the two-man event. Reagan seized the microphone on their behalf and won back his front-runner's spot.

But if Bush was unprepared for victory in Iowa, he also was unwilling to surrender to Reagan each time it appeared he was out of the race. In an extraordinary series of ups and downs, he won in Massachusetts, lost in the South and in Illinois, came back in Connecticut and Maine, lost in

Wisconsin, New York and other states, and finally in recent weeks won in Michigan and Pennsylvania and came very close in Texas.

"He was like Dracula, rising from the grave," Bush aide Vic Gold said last week with a chuckle. "The media tried to pound a stake into Bush's heart, but it just doesn't work."

But his last surge of victories marked a campaign that was getting back on its feet too late. Ironically, on the night of his Michigan victory, two television networks announced that Reagan had won enough delegates elsewhere to lock up a first-ballot nomination at the convention. In the end, Bush's roller-coaster campaign measured less his own strength than the weakness of support for Reagan.

Bush, the eighth GOP candidate to drop out of the nomination race this year, handled his exit with the same "good sport" optimism that marked his entire campaign. Some said his failure to go for the political jugular cost him his chance to stop Reagan. Bush also conceded that he was a less articulate speaker than the former

California governor. Reagan, Bush said, is an "effective campaigner, he's very well known, he's been out there for 12 years in the pursuit of this and done a very good job of it."

Asked about his future plans, Bush said, "I want to finish in style. I don't want to sulk around."

Bush said he would speak at the Iowa caucus meeting June 6 and act as co-host with Reagan at dinners to raise funds for the other defeated Republican candidates next month. After that, it appears likely that Bush—a millionaire who built his own oil-drilling business—will continue as an investment consultant.

"Am I disappointed in not achieving what I set out to achieve on entering this race? Of course I am," Bush concluded. "Was it worth it? Did we achieve anything? Yes we did . . . I have addressed the issues facing our country as I saw them and as a result, I believe our political process has been strengthened. We have fought a good fight—a strong fight. Now let's buckle down and continue to fight by working to make 1980 a winning year not only for the Republican Party but for America."